School of Computing, Engineering, and the Built Environment
Edinburgh Napier University

MRes Student Project

Application instructions:
Detailed instructions are available at :
https://www.napier.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/doctoral-college/how-to-apply

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact the Director of Studies (see details below) to discuss the project and their suitability for it.

Project details

Supervisory Team:
- DIRECTOR OF STUDY: Dr Iain Donald (Email: i.donald@napier.ac.uk)
- 2ND SUPERVISOR: tbc

Subject Group: Applied Informatics

Funding status: Self funded

Project Title: Playable Archives: Creating engagement with specialist collections through data-driven tools and digital innovation

Project description:

This MRes project is situated between informatics, data science and creative computing. The project will investigate the research question: "How can small GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) make best use of data-driven tools and digital technology innovation to enhance their collections?"
The United Kingdom has many cultural institutions that exist with a mission to provide access to knowledge and for over a decade there has been increased digitisation of collections, but these are often underutilised (Hawkins, 2022) or have unforeseen constraints to prevent wider engagement (Baker, 2016). Many smaller institutions typically have highly specialised collections that include digital components (images, video, voice recordings, datasets) but often lack the skills or resources to enhance public awareness and engagement with these smaller collections. Research projects are often driven by technological trends and the advent of new technologies (Münster et al, 2021) but there is an abundance of data that is underutilised. This research

project proposes a practice-based approach working with material available in the collections at Edinburgh Napier University (e.g. War Poets Collection, Edward Clark Collection, Mehew Robert Louis Stevenson or Jim Haynes Archive) to develop digital projects, that encourage thoughtful use and collaboration of materials for public engagement. Using available datasets, the project will explore the challenges of making data meaningful for more creative and engaging outputs (Istvandity et al, 2024). The project will explore how digital innovation can empower a range of activity relating to public engagement, content curation, digitisation, description and metadata creation, long-term file preservation, as well as access and discoverability to primary source material.

References

Baker, J. (2016). A history of History through the lens of our digital present, the traditions that shape and constrain data driven historical research, and what librarians can do about it (Version 1).

University of Sussex. https://hdl.handle.net/10779/uos.23427584.v1
Hawkins, A. (2022). Archives, linked data and the digital humanities: increasing access to digitised and born-digital archives via the semantic web. Archival Science, 22(3), 319-344.

Istvandity, L., Baker, S., & Long, P. (2024). Creative futures for cultural heritage: a typology of creative practice in the GLAM sector–towards a creative heritage approach. Museum Management and Curatorship, 1-17.

Münster, S., Utescher, R., & Ulutas Aydogan, S. (2021). Digital topics on cultural heritage investigated: how can data-driven and data-guided methods support to identify current topics and trends in digital heritage?. Built Heritage, 5, 1-13.

Candidate characteristics

Education:

A second class honour degree or equivalent qualification in a suitable area e.g. Computing Science.

English language requirement

IELTS score must be at least 6.5 (with not less than 6.0 in each of the four components). Other, equivalent qualifications will be accepted. Full details of the University's policy are available online.

Essential attributes:

- Experience of, and keen interest in, using and working with datasets in a creative manner.
- Competent in interdisciplinary research approaches and qualitative and quantitative research methods.

- Knowledge of, and engagement with, user experience design, interaction design and digital media.
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Strong motivation, with evidence of independent research skills relevant to the project
- Good time management

Desirable attributes:

- Practical experience in visualisation design and development. An interest in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums.

Application checklist:

- Statement no longer than 1 page describing your motivations and fit with the project
- Recent and complete curriculum vitae. The curriculum must include a declaration regarding the English language qualifications of the candidate.
- Supporting documents will have to be submitted by successful candidates.
- 2 academic references, using the Postgraduate Educational Reference Form (download)